



Kurdistan

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Dear Pastor,

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“...the power of the Holy Spirit will, in God’s good time, have a signal manifestation in the triumph of Christianity in those (Islamic) lands.”

-Samuel M. Zwemer, *Islam, a Challenge to Faith* (p. 296)-

Day-to-day Gospel

The opportunities to spread the Gospel in most of the Western world are as varied as they are numerous. When thinking of the how and who in the Middle East the message does not change, but the how and the who becomes the how and the when.

We cannot simply knock on doors. We would be thrilled if that changed tomorrow, but until it does we must be circumspect in purposing to give the Gospel in a place where those opportunities, often, need seeking out. Let’s look at some examples. West: Checking out at the grocery store and casually invites the cashier to church this week. Middle East: Checks out, purposely, with the same cashier each time in order to strike up a conversation about anything. Once the conversation becomes ritual invites that person to their home for coffee/meal or vice versa. During the following meals (as there will likely be many) seeks the Holy Spirit’s leading in presenting the Gospel.

This is evangelism in the Middle East. Targeted, focused, intense and always in the front of the missionary’s mind.

During a conversation with our Pastor we had an epiphany. Churches are not pressuring us to perform, but they are wanting to know what we do, i.e., how we spread the Gospel, are we being faithful to spread the Gospel and what are the results or reactions of those evangelistic efforts? We will begin to, purposefully, include some of these encounters in our future letters.

Logistics

We are planning a furlough for 2020. The dates and times are listed in the body of the email.

Pray for the believers in Kurdistan and that the Gospel would see increase to the glory of God.

Please pray for my (Matt) health. I was diagnosed with Graves Disease. Praise God we have a diagnosis.

Your servants,

Matt & Apryl Haynes



The same Gospel in any language - Christ only





The Wife's perspective

The Witness of a Godly Marriage

Marriage here can often be a sad thing to witness. Most are arranged by the mothers and lack any real love. They are a functional means to an end - having lots of babies (as a good Muslim couple should do) to perpetuate both their ethnicity and Islam and keeping tradition intact.

Kurdish weddings, however, are some of the most lavish, celebratory events you will ever see. With Kurdish music booming through the hall, the bride sits next to her groom adorned in a lavish dress with a wide, gold belt and multiple layers of gold necklaces. Hundreds of guests shuffle by, greeting the couple and sometimes pinning gifts of money or gold on the couple. Everyone wears their best Kurdish clothes and celebrates by dancing Kurdish traditional dances throughout the long evening. People laugh, holler and smile and take endless filtered selfies.

Then the marriage begins. The couple moves in with the groom's parents, daily life begins, and over just a few weeks and months you see smiles fade and distance between them grow. The husband spends copious amounts of time with his friends at the tea shop (even vacations are taken with friends instead of wives) while she raises the children and passes her time with gossip. There are, of course, refreshingly beautiful exceptions to this, but they are rare. So rare in fact that two terms are used to delineate between the two different types of marriages here - the "love marriage" and the "cousin marriage". Only sometimes can a marriage be described by both of these terms.

Recently, I was sitting with a friend whose wedding we had attended about five months prior. She told me that they fight all the time but she was glad they were fighting because at least they were talking. I tried to encourage her and her response was, "Yes, but you have a happy marriage. We're not American or European. It's just not like that for us." I told her that the difference between us was not culture. My birth country is filled with failed marriages. The difference was that we both know Christ and we try to let him guide us. She shut down which I expected her to do. I remind myself that someone shutting down is as likely a response to the Holy Spirit than words that had no impact.

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An imperfect but godly marriage can be a powerful witness. That is not unique to this region. Both here and in the United States, our marriages are the most clear picture of Christ and the church. They are opportunities to both glorify God in the home and show forth Christ outside of it.

